

Application N : 09/277312

Case No.: 53836US002

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-30. (canceled).

31. (currently amended) A method of preparing a flexible solid intumescent fire barrier material, comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a halogen-free organic binder in the form of a latex binder;
- (b) drying the latex binder to remove any volatiles;
- (ac) ~~providing combining~~, in a substantially volatile free state, a mixture consisting essentially of the latex binder, water-insoluble intumescent mineral granules, ~~halogen-free organic binder initially in the form of latex binder which has been dried to remove any volatiles,~~ and phosphorus containing flame retardant; and

(bd) mixing the mixture at high shear conditions using a twin screw extruder;

wherein the resulting fire barrier material has a softness value from about 0.49 to about 1.45 mm and an expansion ratio ~~at least 2.9 times greater than the same composition would have if processed under high shear conditions with volatiles present~~ from about 6.9 to about 8.8.